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OVERALL ESTIMATE

1. The most important objective of all evaluation work is to answer the questions whether and when will the Soviets attack in the West. This question can -- with a certain amount of assurance -- be answered only on the basis of a careful analysis of the political, economic and military situation prevailing at a given time. The evaluator must furthermore attempt to place himself in the position of the Soviet leaders in order to give the greatest possible consideration not only to known facts but to imponderables and, specifically, psychological factors as well.

2. Such an estimate, from the point of view of the Soviets, based on details presented in paragraphs A through D, is as follows:

a. The political situation of the Eastern Bloc is largely "balanced". The political consolidation of the territories gained by the war has made considerable progress, but is not yet completed. Any war would interfere with this process and might even result in a partial or total loss of these gains. Western hopes for an overthrow of the regime in peacetime are unfounded.

The political structure of the West is heterogeneous; the West has not yet been able to weld the large number of countries and peoples within its orbit into one uniform and powerful defense system. The results achieved in this respect are insignificant and give the East no reason to fear a serious threat from the West in the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Soviets will best serve their objective of Communist world domination by carrying on a most intensive cold war, rather than by unleashing World War III now. Previous results obtained in this manner have proven satisfactory as is evident from the situations in the Near East and the Far East as well as from the strength of the Communist parties in Western Europe, not to mention the slow pace of western integration. The Soviets have every reason to believe that, by employing this method, they will be able to obtain similar and even better results in the future.

b. Contrary to the political situation, the economic situation of the Eastern Bloc must be considered "unbalanced". Output and production in some fields exceed the needs of a sustained war effort while, in other fields, they are completely inadequate. The sovietization of the satellite countries, the collectivization of their agriculture, and their industrialization are still under way and cannot be completed before 1955. Only then will it be possible to exercise a central control over the entire eastern economy, while a war started prior to this date must needs lead to serious dislocations in the structure of their economy.

The economic situation of the West is good as regards output and production. Just as in the political field, the West, however, is handicapped by the heterogeneous character of its economic system which lacks joint direction. This is a deficiency which, according to Communist doctrines,

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is bound to have the effect that, some day, capitalism must destroy itself, possibly even without a Third World War.

c. Characteristic of the military situation is the overwhelming superiority of the armed forces maintained by the Eastern Bloc. The most opportune moment for the employment of this superiority was missed, however, when the war in Korea began, since, from that date forward, the West has made a serious rearmament effort.

As in the political and economic field, the military situation of the West is marked by lack of integration and the weaknesses resulting therefrom. Although the West is rearming there is no reason for the East to believe that this armament effort should become a serious threat in the next years.

3. Bearing the above in mind, an overall estimate, as seen from the West, appears to result in the following picture:

a. The struggle for world hegemony is still in balance. Having failed to attack Europe which, from 1945 to the present, lay practically defenseless, the East in all probability will not start an aggressive war in the near future, i.e., 1952 and, probably not in 1953, because both the political development and the preparations in the field of armament production are not yet advanced sufficiently for the Eastern Bloc to start this war, and because the Soviet leaders believe they can attain more easily their final goal by cold war tactics rather than by a shooting war. Only when the Soviet leaders believe they must forestall a western attack or exploit a decisive weakness of the West, which is scarcely to be reckoned with, will they take the offensive. Barring this possibility, the East will probably continue to develop and accelerate all of its potentialities in its own sphere and simultaneously employ all available means of international policy and cold war to achieve world communism.

b. Two factors cannot be judged in advance: The present world situation is, and, for a long time to come, will be, like a powder barrel which could explode any moment from some unforeseen and quite unintentional spark. It is the essence of any dictatorship that, ultimately, but one man - although he may take advice from a number of aides - concentrates the power of decision in his hand. Although Stalin has proved a very sober and cool-headed politician, there is a possibility that sometime emotion may prevail over reason and thus conjure up disastrous consequences.

*What about USSR
do they really pull back*

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